

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**BERKELEY REP'S THE GROUND FLOOR LAUNCHES BI-ANNUAL
PLAYWRITING SALON FOR LOCAL PLAYWRIGHTS****Bay Area writers invited to learn more about the development of new work**

September 15, 2015 – Known for fostering playwrights at all stages of their careers, [The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work](#) today announces that it will begin hosting bi-annual salons in the fall and spring to share information with local playwrights about the new play development process at Berkeley Rep.

Madeleine Oldham, director of The Ground Floor and resident dramaturg, will present a short overview of The Ground Floor and then field questions from the group on everything from relationship building to commissioning to how seasons are selected. The Ground Floor invites aspiring and experienced writers for an evening of lively conversation.

The inaugural event will be held on **Monday, October 5, 2015 at 7:30 PM** at Berkeley Rep's bar at 2025 Addison Street. The event is free, but space is limited. To register, visit <http://bit.ly/1UEYBxy>. A spring salon will be held in April 2016.

"We're very excited to provide a more direct link between The Ground Floor and Bay Area writers," says **Oldham**. "The Ground Floor Summer Residency Lab has a strong track record of local participation, and we want to make sure artists in our area are aware of that opportunity. We're really looking forward to engaging in a dialogue with our immediate community about how The Ground Floor can best support local playwrights."

The Ground Floor seeks to enhance and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre. This includes supporting commissioned artists and developing shows for the season, as well as The Ground Floor's flagship program, the Summer Residency Lab. By inviting dynamic artists to work on new projects at any stage in the creative process, the Summer Residency Lab promotes vital cross-pollination among artists and champions the spirit of innovation inherent to Berkeley and the Bay Area. Since the Lab's inaugural year in 2012, more than 300 artists working on 59 projects have participated. The 2015 Summer Residency Lab participants included local artists **Anne Galjour, Peter Sinn Nachtrieb, Christopher Chen, and Annie Smart**.

Three shows commissioned and developed through The Ground Floor have already appeared on Berkeley Rep's main stage: **KJ Sanchez and Jenny Mercein's *X's and O's (A Football Love Story)*** (2015), **Marcus Gardley's *The House that will not Stand*** (2014), and **Dan LeFranc's *Troublemaker, or The Freakin' Kick-A Adventures of Bradley Boatright*** (2013). In February 2016, the Theatre presents a fourth: the world premiere of **Julia Cho's *Aubergine***, which was commissioned by Berkeley Rep and developed in The Ground Floor. Obie Award-winning director **Liesl Tommy** helms this bittersweet and moving meditation on family, forgiveness, and the things that nourish us.

(MORE)

RECIPIENT OF THE TONY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING REGIONAL THEATRE

ABOUT THE GROUND FLOOR: BERKELEY REP'S CENTER FOR THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK

As the umbrella for all new play activity at Berkeley Rep, The Ground Floor is a bold initiative designed to raise the bar on the Tony Award–winning nonprofit's already successful record of artistic innovation. Think of it as an incubator for theatrical start-ups or a top-notch R&D facility for artists. The Ground Floor is made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts; Bank of America; the Kenneth Rainin Foundation; supporters of Berkeley Rep's Create Campaign; and ArtPlace (artplaceamerica.org), a collaboration of top national foundations, the National Endowment for the Arts, and various federal agencies to accelerate creative place making across the U.S. For more information on each project, and for future announcements or opportunities to interact, visit: berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. In over four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep. These shows have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, and many other honors. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its bustling facilities — the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city. Visit <http://www.berkeleyrep.org> for more information.

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